

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 0641

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, GH

SUBJ: GHANA PATRIOTS ASSOCIATION FORMED

REF: A) ACCRA 8630 ?) ACCRA 9252

1. YET ANOTHER NEW POLITICAL GROUP, "GHANA PATRIOTS ASSOCIATION", WAS INAUGURATED AT LAVISH AND WELL-ORGANIZED CEREMONY AT ACCRA COMMUNITY CENTER ON JANUARY 21. ABOUT 2,000 PEOPLE TURNED OUT, MANY CLAD IN NEW T-SHIRTS BEARING NAME OF ASSOCIATION ON FRONT AND ITS MOTTO, "BE HONEST TO GHANA NOW", ON BACK. ALTHOUGH HANDOUT ON ASSOCIATION'S AIMS AND OBJECTIVES CLAIMS IT IS NON-POLITICAL, A KEY OBJECTIVE IS "TO EDUCATE THE BROAD MASSES OF THE PEOPLE TO REALIZE THE GREAT BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM THE PROPOSED UNION GOVERNMENT."

2. CHAIRMAN OF NEW ASSOCIATION IS ABRAHAM TIBO, DESCRIBED BY ASSOCIATION AS AN "ACCRA BUSINESS EXECUTIVE." WE HEAR HE IS A SEMI-LITERATE REAL ESTATE OPERATOR. OTHER OFFICERS OF ASSOCIATION ARE: N.W. CHOCOSI (NATIONAL GROUP LEADER) AND NT. ADDY (GENERAL SECRETARY). WE HAVE NO BIO DATA ON THEM.

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3. ASKED BY POLOFF HOW ASSOCIATION RELATES TO ALEX QUAISON-SACKEY'S ILL-FATED "GHANA PATRIOTIC FRONT" (REF A) TIBO SAID THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS AND THAT FRONT IS "FINISHED, DONE WITH." TIBO CRITIXIZED GHANA PEACE AND SOLIDARITY COUNCIL AS TOO "INTERNATIONAL" IN OUT LOOK; HIS OWN ASSOCIATION, HE SAID, WILL BE EXCLUSIVELY "FOR GHANA."

IN HIS SPEECH, TIBO EXPRESSED ASSOCIATION'S SUPPORT FOR UNION GOVERNMENT AND APPEALED TO CITIZENS TO VOTE OVERWHELMINGLY FOR IT DURING FORTHCOMING REFERENDUM.

4. COMMENT: NEW ASSOCIATION OBVIOUSLY HAS BLESSING OF GOG AND MAY WELL BE FUNDED BY IT; MEETING WAS OPENED BY MAJOR MARK-OKAI, EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF ACCRA CITY COUNCIL, STANDING IN FOR GREATER ACCRA REGIONAL COMMISSIONER ZUMAH.

5. IN BROADER TERMS, MANY NEW ORGANIZATIONS ARE SPRINGING UP IN THIS PRE-REFERENDUM PERIOD AND SOME ESTABLISHED ONES ARE BECOMING MORE ACTIVE. "THE FRIENDS" AND "THE ORGANIZERS' COUNCIL" WERE FORMED LAST MONTH (REF B) AND HAVE BEEN CONSOLIDATING THEIR POSITIONS AND PUSHING HARD FOR UNION GOVERNMENT. ACTIVISTS IN THE GHANA PEACE AND SOLIDARITY COUNCIL HAVE UNLEASHED GOON SQUADS BOTH TO INTIMIDATE OPPONENTS OF UNION GOVERNMENT AND IN HOPES OF ENTANGLING THE RULING SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC) IN STRONG-ARM TACTICS. (THUS FAR, BY MILD PUBLIC AND POSSIBLY STRONGER PRIVATE REBUKES, SMC HAS KEPT SOME DISTANCE FROM COUNCIL AND HAS RESISTED RULING BY COERCION.) NATIONAL UNION OF GHANA STUDENTS (NUGS) IS BACK IN NEWS FOLLOWING JANUARY 13 STUDENT/POLICE CLASHES AND SOME OF ITS LEADERS CLEARLY HOPE FOR FURTHER CONFRONTATIONS WITH
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POLICE. OUTLOOK THEREFORE IS FOR CONTINUED FACTIONALISM AND IN-FIGHTING AT LEAST THROUGH MARCH 30 REFERENDUM, WHEN UNION GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO BE APPROVED AND THE STAGE SET FOR FURTHER POLITICAL STRUGGLES AS JULY 1979 GENERAL ELECTIONS APPROACH.
SMITH

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